

USCIS Announces New Premium Processing Options
August 21, 2006

Effective August 28, 2006, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) will begin offering “premium processing” of certain types of I-140 Immigrant Petitions. For an additional \$1,000 premium processing fee, USCIS will provide initial adjudications within 15 calendar days of I-140 Petitions filed on behalf of certain workers in the employment-based “third preference” (“EB-3”) category.

Premium processing is already available for I-129 Nonimmigrant Petitions. For now, premium processing of Immigrant Petitions will be restricted to EB-3 Professionals, (positions that require at least a bachelor’s degree), and Skilled Workers (positions that require at least two years of education, training or experience). Eventually, the premium processing program will be expanded to include other types of I-140 Immigrant Petitions; I-765 Applications for Employment Authorization tied to employment-based Adjustment of Status Applications; and I-539 Applications to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status in the following visa categories: B-1, J-1, J-1, E-1, E-2, H-4, L-2, O-3, P-4, R-2 and TD.

Petitioners and applicants who do not wish to pay the \$1,000 premium processing fee will still be able to file forms I-129, I-140, I-765 and I-539 by paying the regular filing fees. We will post additional updates on the expanded premium processing program as more information becomes available.

If you have any questions about USCIS policies and procedures, please contact your McCandlish Holton immigration attorney.